

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 CIAE-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4501

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: TURKISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN ROUNDUP, APRIL 28 - MAY 4

REF: ANKARA 3175 (DTG 271230Z APR 77)

1. THE DOMINANT ELEMENT OF THE TURKISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN THIS PAST WEEK WAS VIOLENCE. THE ARMED ATTACKS ON REPUBLICAN EPOEPL'S PARTY (RPP) CHAIRMAN ECEVIT AS HE TOURED NORTHCENTRAL AND EASTERN ANATOLIA (ANKARA 3231 AND PREVIOUS - NOTAL) INTENSIFIED THE SENSE OF PARTISAN AND SECTARIAN DIVISION. THE GOVERNMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLEDGED TO TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO CONTROL VIOLENCE -- AND IN FACT SAID THAT IT HAD TAKEN THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS IN NIKSAR, SIRAN AND ERZINCAN, BUT THAT THE RPP HAD PROVOKED THE INCIDENTS. THE RPP AND OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF -- AT BEST -- INADEQUATE PRECAUTIONS AND -- AT WORST -- COLLUSION IN THE INCIDENTS.

2. UPON HIS RETURN TO ANKARA APRIL 28, ECEVIT WAS GIVEN A HERO'S WELCOME. THE RPP HAD BLANKETED THE CITY WITH HANDBILLS ANNOUNCING HIS RETURN, AND THE ROUTE WAS SO CROWDED WITH SUPPORTERS THAT THE DRIVE FROM THE AIRPORT TOOK TWO AND ONE HALF HOURS RATHER THAN THE 40 MINUTES IT NORMALLY TAKES.

3. ALTHOUGH ECEVIT'S IMAGE WAS ENHANCED BY THE EVENTS IN NIKSAR, SIRAN AND ERZINCAN, THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF THE BLOODY MAY 1 CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LEFT AND LEFT IN ISTANBUL (ISTANBUL 1514 AND PREVIOUS NOTAL) IS NOT YET CLEAR. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE RPP CLAIM THAT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS THE EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF /FASCISTS" WITHIN THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT UNDERCUT. FURTHERMORE, IF VIOLENCE CONTINUES TO PLAGUE THE CAMPAIGN, ECEVIT MAY AT SOME POINT BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO CHARGES THAT HE AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE AT LEAST PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVOKING THE VIOLENCE. (THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP) IS PARTICULARLY STRONG IN NIKSAR, SIRAN, AND ERZINCAN AREAS. MOREOVER, THERE IS A DEEP SECTARIAN DIVISION BETWEEN SUNNI AND SHIITE MUSLIMS WHICH IS AGGRAVATED BY THE FACT THAT THE SHIITES, A STRONG MINORITY IN THE AREA, ARE ALMOST COMPLETELY PRO-RPP. ECEVIT'S DECISION TO MAKE A CAMPAIGN SWING THROUGH THE AREA IS CONSIDERED BY MANY -- INCLUDING SOME SUPPORTERS -- TO HAVE BEEN A DANGEROUS ELECTION TACTIC DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE THE INABILITY OF THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL VIOLENCE.)

4. PARTY LEADERS DID LITTLE CAMPAIGNING DURING THE PAST WEEK SINCE THE PARTIES WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH CANDIDATE SELECTION. ALTHOUGH THE SELECTION PROCESS WAS IN LARGE PART COMPLETED ON MAY 1. AS SCHEDULED, THE FINAL CANDIDATE LISTS WILL NOT BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PUBLIC UNTIL MAY 7. THE INCOMPLETE CANDIDATE LISTS PUBLISHED SO FAR SUGGEST THAT LESS THAN HALF OF THE INCUMBENT DEPUTIES WILL BE REELECTED. DESPITE THIS UNUSUALLY LARGE PROJECTED TURNOVER, NO CLEAR TRENDS ARE APPARENT. THE HIGHEST RATE OF TURNOVER WILL BE IN THE RPP WHICH DOES SUFFER FROM INTERNAL DIVISIONS. WHILE THIS UNDOUBTEDLY ACCOUNTS FOR SOME CHANGES, THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT MAY HAVE BEEN EXPANDED PARTICIPATION OF THE PARTY RANK AND FILE IN THE CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS. THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTY OFFICIAL TO LOSE OUT WAS RPP DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL ISMAIL HAKKI BIRLER. IRONICALLY, BIRLER'S AREA OF PARTY RESPONSIBILITY IS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

5. ANOTHER CABINET CHANGE OCCURRED DURING THE WEEK WHEN MINISTER OF STATE MUSTAFA KEMAL ERKOVAN RESIGNED FROM THE NAP AND WAS REPLACED AS MINISTER BY SENATOR OSMAN ALBAYRAK. ERKOVAN HAS JOINED THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP).

6. A POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE WAS THE

ANNOUNCED DECISION OF EX-PRESIDENT BAYAR, ASSOCIATE OF THE LATE PRIMIN MENDERES, TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE JP IN SEVERAL PROVINCES. IN 1973 BAYAR SUPPORTED THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP) AND IS CREDITED BY MANY FOR THE STRONG SHOWING MADE BY THAT PARTY. THE DP NOW APPEARS MORIBUND AND MANY OF ITS LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS NOW SUPPORT THE JP. THE BAYAR DECISION TO CAMPAIGN ACTIVELY SHOULD HELP CONSOLIDATE THAT TREND.

7. THE FINAL LEGAL OBSTACLE TO EARLY ELECTIONS WAS REMOVED APRIL 29 WHEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT REJECTED NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) CHAIRMAN ERBAKAN'S CLAIM THAT THE DECISION TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN JUNE HAD BEEN UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

8. ERBAKAN GAVE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO TERCUMAN APRIL 30 IN WHICH HE SAID AN NSP GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

A. ABROGATE THE TURKEY-EC AGREEMENTS.  
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B. PROMOTE A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (UDI) BY TURKISH CYPRUS ON OCTOBER 29, 1977.

C. ARRANGE FOR THE DISMANTLING OF ILLEGAL GREEK FORTIFICATIONS ON AEGEAN ISLANDS.

D. END THE "CRUEL TREATMENT OF TURKS IN WESTERN THRACE".

E. PROMOTE RELATIONS WITH "FRIENDLY AND FRATERNAL COUNTRIES" -- ESPECIALLY IRAQ, LIBYA, SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT.

9. COMMENT: NEARLY FOUR WEEKS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE PARLIAMENT'S DECISION TO HOLD ELECTIONS ON JUNE 5. ECEVIT IS THE ONLY PARTY LEADER CAMPAIGNING FULL-TIME AND AS WE NOTED LAST WEEK HE SEEMS TO HAVE JUMPED OFF TO AN EARLY LEAD OVER DEMIREL WHO WILL NOT START CAMPAIGNING UNTIL MAY 12. DEMIREL SEEMS TO BE LAGGING NOW, BUT HE IS PROBABLY HOPING THAT HIS TIMING IS RIGHT AND THAT HIS WHIRLWIND CAMPAIGN WILL BEGIN JUST AS THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE SEEN ENOUGH OF ECEVIT. IT IS A RISKY STRATEGY -- ONE THAT DID NOT WORK FOR HIM IN 1973 -- BUT, BEING PRIME MINISTER, HE MAY HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF PULLING IT OFF THIS TIME.

10. CONSULATES GENERAL ISTANBUL AND IZMIR AND CONSULATE ADANA HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT.  
MACOMBER

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